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WORLD CONGREGATIONALISM

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EDITORIAL

We have the apostolic precedent of becoming all things to all men. If the Apostle meant what we think he meant, he made different approaches to different sorts of men. What mental image have we of the men of our own age? Does our evangelism tend to proceed on the lines of one general conception of Man? These queries relate at the moment to Britain. From the Chair of the English Congregational Union, the Rev. H. A. Hamilton deplored our failure to reach the non-literate. But in the opinion of the Rev. Geraint Vaughan Jones, President of the Scottish Union, it is the intellectuals who are the neglected section of the community; they 'seem to be left out in most evangelism, yet it is they who in great measure are moulding the unseen forces shaping our age—the scientific workers, the writers (most of whom are non-Christians), the academic teachers because of whose being outside it the Church is so greatly impoverished'. These seem to be contradictory diagnoses of our ineffectualness. Yet the point may be that while the Churches have become sorely aware of their failure to reach the non-literate and are anxious to evangelise them if only they knew how, no comparable concern is displayed, or effort made to discover how, to evangelise the intellectuals.

If we consider the intellectuals, merely to breathe the word raises the hackles of great numbers of those who represent Piety. The Rev. Daniel Jenkins said in 'Congregationalism—a Restatement' that the revivals of broadly evangelical character in the 19th century which so greatly influenced Congregational Churches had 'hardly a glimmering of the possibility of making the intellectual life a sphere of Christian discipleship'. The effect on the *non-literates* has been notable. In the realm of Faith there has filtered down to the non-literates from the resented and unevangelised intellectuals the assumption that intellect has finally debunked all religious belief. Nor is this all. The aforementioned evangelicalism had great virtues but it also became a

pioneer in the techniques of mass suggestion. In whatever directions the non-literates now succumb to mass suggestion, they are patently impervious to it in the realm of religion! Moreover, a couple of generations ago a famous book entitled 'La Trahision des clercs', could accuse the intellectuals of betraying the common man through their detachment from his condition; a marked trend today is for intellectuals to be passionately pre-occupied with the demonic cleavages in human community and to be turning to the service of agencies like the international institutions and scientifically-based humanitarian callings like psychological medicine, W.H.O., departments of sociology, etc., but without finding inspiration and supporting dynamic within the Churches. A ministry to intellectuals would first try to understand what makes the intellectual 'tick'. It would certainly not proceed from the churlish prejudice that intellectual energy is merely arrogance and pride.

Or take the creative artist. What place is there in our theology and piety for artistic creativity? Here is a dimension of human consciousness, and a mysteriously compulsive one at that, which our Church culture has not known what on earth or in heaven to do with and do about. It was different with the Huguenots. The fact that their theology was fundamentally similar to that of English Congregationalists did not prevent architectural and sculptural achievements of a Jean Goujon or a Du Cerceau or fail to combine in the same person Pelissier the artist-in-enamel and the fervent evangelist. Most relevant of all to our concern, however, is the sensitiveness of great creative artists today to the tragic disunity in human affairs and the menace of meaninglessness that hangs over man's terrestrial existence. Their very entry into the inner recesses of the personality for their modes of expression is not entirely what it is often presumed to be, viz. a mere retreat from the objective reality of the world. It is the affirmation of a dynamic spiritual reality at the heart of personality which neither mass-conformism nor totalitarian uniformity can reach and subdue. Of all men detested by modern totalitarianisms, the creative artist is feared the most.

There would, therefore, be a strong case for particular ministries from within the Church to such disregarded types of modern man. A conventional ministry of the common denominator type is no longer adequate. To this crucial matter we hope to be able to return again. Meanwhile, in connection with the artistic consciousness there is the notable experiment at the Judson Memorial Church in Greenwich Village, New York. We hope to present an article on it in a succeeding issue of WORLD CONGREGATIONALISM.

G.J.

Congregationalism and the United Church of Christ in the U.S.A.

HARLAND G. LEWIS

If, as P. T. Forsyth has pointed out, Word and Spirit are uneasily resident together in Congregationalism, perhaps we are thus given a clue to an understanding of the travail which has beset Congregationalists in the United States during their twenty-year approach to entry into the United Church of Christ. No principle is the all-illuminating one, of course, but the strain from the Reformation via Calvin, felt among us in both faith and order, does relate but awkwardly with the Anabaptist and sectarian strain in us from the same fountain source. Pressure, at almost any point, from history external or internal, has always served to expose this fault line in our Congregational life. So one may suggest that the serious venture into union of United States Congregationalists with their Evangelical and Reformed brethren, a presbyterian denomination, has brought to the surface all the latent ambiguities which lie in us unfaced and even denied in more tranquil times.

From the first conversations in St. Louis, Missouri, between local ministers of the two groups, until the final adoption of The Constitution of the United Church of Christ in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, in July of this year, lies a journey of twenty years' duration. In that period we have learned a great deal about ourselves, both as to our strengths and as to our lacks. We have been driven to examine our roots and to confront our relevance or irrelevance to today. For ourselves (as Congregationalists) the result of a number of mergers with small congregationally oriented denominations in time past, this new venture is the first we have entered upon across polity lines. In fact this is one of the exciting aspects of this new pilgrimage, a breaking of new ground in the ecumenical life of the Church.

The Reformed Church (the R. of E. and R.) had its beginnings in Zwingli and Switzerland, and Luther and Germany, and in compromise sought at Heidelberg. These people came early to Pennsylvania and through the 18th century became a sturdy and vigorous part of American Christian life. The theological and liturgical renascence centred at Mercersburg in the early 19th century, in Schaff and Nevin, is a notable chapter in American theology. The Evangelical Churches are

German people come from the Palatinate region, to the then American Western frontier around St. Louis in the 19th century. They were there greatly shaped by the frontier spirit, which was an impress upon the already vigorous free spirit which impelled them to leave an inhospitable homeland to seek a new country and life. These two groups merged to form the Evangelical and Reformed Church about twenty-five years ago.

The twenty-year pilgrimage has been one of almost continuous activity, involving first the joint preparation of and action on 'A Basis of Union', detailing the proposal before us. This was approved by the General Council of Congregational Christian Churches, acting for itself (the only jurisdiction it had), and the Executive Committee of the General Synod of the E. and R. Church. This action was challenged in a lawsuit brought by dissident Congregational Churches, which suit went through a costly and delaying course (despite I Corinthians 6: 1-7), eventually to be thrown out by high New York State court. The writing of the Constitution of the United Church of Christ then began; it was in 1960 approved by the United Church of Christ General Synod (which had been constituted in 1957) for submission to C.C. Churches and E. and R. Synods. The required percentages subsequently approving, it was adopted, and the two uniting denominations now drop into the background, and the life and structure of the United Church of Christ comes into sharp, clear foreground. The final moment of the announcement of the vote and the adoption of the Constitution and the declaration of the United Church of Christ to be in fact in existence, was a moment of high emotion, ranking with the solemn excitement of that moment in 1959 at Oberlin, Ohio, when the General Synod adopted the 'Statement of Faith' drawn up for it by a distinguished panel of theologians and pastors. There has been an incredible amount of two-and-three-layered activity among us these years past: a carrying on of our own mission, a maintenance of close and deepening co-operation between all C.C. and E. and R. counterpart agencies and boards; and finally the emerging from shadow existence of the United Church of Christ structure, which now is firm and vigorous. Administrative, procedural, organisational patience has been sorely tested. But these are the housekeeping chores inescapable to such an undertaking, and they have been fulfilled faithfully and well.

What, then, is the nature of the United Church of Christ as we see it now in the Constitution? One perceives at once, in the Preamble, the tone and temper of the new Church. To the masthead is nailed the flag; it comes into being 'in order to express more fully the oneness in Christ of the Churches composing it, to make more effective their common witness in Him, and to serve His Kingdom in the world'.

Paragraph two of the Constitution places the New Church centrally in the classic Christian tradition, saying, 'The United Church acknowledges as its sole Head, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, and the Saviour of man. It acknowledges as brethren in Christ all who share in this confession. It looks to the Word of God in the Scriptures, and to the presence and power of the Holy Spirit, to prosper its creative and redemptive work in the world. It claims as its own the faith of the historic Church expressed in ancient creeds and reclaimed in the basic insights of the Protestant Reformers. It affirms the responsibility of the Church in each generation to make this faith its own in reality of worship, in honesty of thought and expression, and in purity of heart before God. In accordance with the teaching of our Lord and the practice prevailing among evangelical Christians, it recognises two sacraments: Baptism and the Lord's Supper or Holy Communion'.

The way in which Presbyterian and Congregational polity are brought together in this unique wedding is clear in paragraph three. 'The provisions herein *define* and *regulate* the General Synod and these instrumentalities of the United Church of Christ which are recognised, established by or responsible to the General Synod, and *describe* the free and voluntary relationships which the local Churches Associations, Conferences and ministers sustain with the General Synod and with each other. The pattern of relationships and procedures so described is recommended to local Churches, Associations, Conferences and ministers, to enable them more effectively to accomplish their tasks and the work of the United Church of Christ'. (Italics added).

The new Church is therefore presbyterial with regard to the General Synod and its agencies; it is congregational with regard to local Churches, Associations, Conferences and ministers. It is a curious thing that these two denominations—the one congregational and the other presbyterial—were, in fact, very close to each other in actual practice. Congregational polity has always recognised the local congregation as the basic unit, and all relationships beyond the local parish have been associational and voluntary. In fact, however, the complexity and demands of corporate life as a denomination, and the need of the world for ministries beyond the capacity of any local Church or mere informal co-operation, have led to a structure of State and National agencies, activities, and staff, which was of pure necessity more centralised and decisive than the pure theoretical Congregationalism of a past age and simpler world would perhaps admit.

On the other hand, the presbyterial order of the E. and R. Church has been modified by the essentially congregational temper of American

life, and in actual fact there has been more rugged insistence upon responsible freedom in the E. and R. fellowship, together with a solid churchmanship instinct, than there has been in actual Congregational life. It was, in fact, the practical, daily similarities of the two groups which led to the initial discovery of inner kinship in many realms and eventually to an exploration of the possibility of organic unity. We have now a Constitution which presents a clear and useful pattern of Church life, preserving (to an extent and with a vehemence almost embarrassing to American Congregationalists) the freedom and autonomy of the local Church, while effectively linking and shaping the General Synod and other agencies of the Churches, Associations, and Synods into a more effective force in mission. Paragraph twenty-one has been cited over and over again to anxious Congregationalists. 'The autonomy of the local church is inherent and modifiable only by its own actions . . .' it begins, and then it proceeds to spell out the implications in detail. But there is visible in the whole Constitution a sense that this is a founded freedom, and that freedom in Congregationalism has never meant anarchy, but freedom in and under Christ—a far different thing. Ministerial standing is located, as before, in the Association; and orderly procedures are spelled out in clear and helpful ways. Boards, agencies, and instrumentalities, which in Congregationalism have had autonomy and enormous independent power, are now more directly related to the Church through the General Synod, in the most noticeable presbyterial note in the whole document.

Opposition to the United Church of Christ and the Constitution has been deep seated and continuous and well financed, but it has never involved more than a tiny minority of Churches and individuals. A revival of intense pamphleteering and perpetual mail barrage, plus the litigatory tactics, have given them a voice beyond their numbers.

They have mostly looked back to an idealised and abstracted form of atomized Congregationalism, emphasising the sectarian strain of our tradition, and pleading for nothing above the local level but co-operation and informal relationships. The word 'freedom' has bulked large in all opposition literature, and the title of one anti-union publication is 'Unity by Compulsion'.

Opposition groups to the United Church of Christ were initially constituted from among those who had been engaged in a fight within Congregationalism against 'The Council for Social Action', and the principle of the social concern of the Churches. They have been largely of liberal theological views and conservative social and economic views, though this is not a complete description. They have been apprehensive

of the sturdy theology of the E. and R. Church on one hand, and apprehensive as to what seems to them a more centralised Church and the consequent threat to the total autonomy and freedom of the local Church, on the other. These arguments for local freedom have often had a secular ring to them, being largely concerned with such matters as freedom from outside control, local ownership of property and choice of ministerial leadership. There has not been a great deal of exploration of the full amplitude of the sources of Congregational faith and polity, and there has tended to be an emphasis on one or two notes alone. The attempt has been to preserve for today with extreme literalness certain historically conditioned responses of Congregationalists, without examining the principle which elicited the response, and which might elicit another and contemporary response now. This opposition effort has not always been relevant but it always has been impassioned.

There has been profound conviction among many Congregationalists that the Congregational principle has not been something to be preserved in unchanged and mummified form, intact and rigid, into changing conditions and a new age. Our fathers would be the first to be offended by this point of view. What does the Congregational spirit mean *now*, when in obedience to Word and Spirit we covenant together to be His people? It does not mean precisely the same thing in outer form that it meant in Scrooby, or in Plymouth, or Salem. But dynamically, in inner essence, it means a very great deal, and we must grasp it and let it speak through us now. While Congregationalism is prone to captivity to its culture by its refusal to abdicate the world, it has always had in it, though often but latently, a powerful principle inherited from its sectarian ancestry which has frequently restored it to a posture of Christian criticism of society. The fact of Word-Spirit tension has led to changing form and function, and this tension has been creative as often as it has been destructive.

The same kind of awareness that 'new concessions teach new duties' is evident in the Congregational Union of England and Wales, and in Scotland as well, where there is growing realisation that there is a churchly content in the association of local Churches at regional and national level. This is the development of the idea of the Church, which does not blur nor obliterate the Churches, but which fulfils and includes them. Constitutional reconsiderations designed to recognise what seems in fact to be already in existence, are thus under way in England. This parallel and somewhat similar development need not be considered an abrogation of Congregational principle, but a fulfilment.

The aggressive and tough minded witness of the anti-union group of Congregationalists in the United States in recent years has been a valuable thing. It has forced pro-union people to think deeply and to explore every aspect of their work to discover its relevance and integrity with relation to Congregational principles. There has developed, over these twenty years, a more informed Congregational constituency, than has heretofore been in existence. The very process of shaping a Constitution and bringing into reality the structure of a new Church, has made us all conscious daily of the precious principles inherent in the faith and the polity of which we are heirs. It is felt, generally, that Congregationalism is making a vigorous and forthright witness through its movement into the United Church of Christ. Certainly a somewhat doctrinaire Congregationalism which equates freedom with a local Church autonomy of a largely secular and political nature has little to say to today's world on the Christian level. Indeed it is often the ecclesiastical reflection of a secular political view of conservative and nostalgic cast. The witness is important, but it cannot be said to be the main stream. The United Church of Christ is part of the rediscovery of the reality of the wholeness of the Church at every level, where the Word is preached and heard, and the Sacrament administered. This wholeness is only complete, however, when there is full and open acknowledgement of Christ's Lordship beyond the local congregation. This means that we engage in no slavish labour for mere monolithic organisation, but it does mean that we seek a reflection in our real Church life of the oneness we profess in Christ. American Congregationalists have sought to be obedient as the way has opened to them. Do we not have in this the leading which promises the healing and witness which today's distraught and fragmented world needs? So, far more than being a response merely to the need of the world for a united people of Christ, important though that be, the United Church of Christ is a response to the unity to which Christ calls his people, in the United States, now.

On July 4th, 1961, in the City of Brotherly Love, Philadelphia, where 185 years earlier the nation's founding fathers had signed a Declaration of Independence, the United Church of Christ came fully into being, declaring its dependence upon the grace and leading of God, and the interdependence of all its agencies and instrumentalities in the total mission of the church.

Upon declaration that more than 90% of all Congregational-Christian local churches voting had affirmed the Constitution, and that 33 out of

34 Evangelical and Reformed Synods had voted 'yes', the Constitution was declared in effect, and the delegates rose in spontaneous singing of the Doxology and grateful prayer at this climax of more than 20 years of preparation.

The previous week, the General Council of the Congregational-Christian Churches, and the General Synod of the Evangelical and Reformed Church had met in Philadelphia, and had taken all necessary actions to enable the United Church to become a real and functioning body. All boards and agencies had busily restructured themselves and altered their charters and by-laws to enable them to conform to the requirements of the Constitution. Now several months of basic legal work remains and by 1962 the full life of the United Church will be flowing through all its arms and instruments.

Dr. Ben Herbster, pastor of an E. & R. Church in Cincinatti, Ohio, was elected President of the new Church. He had long been active in important roles in his own Church and in the aborning United Church. Dr. Truman Douglass was elected Executive Vice-President of the new Board of Homeland Ministries, which combines all the home mission efforts of both groups. Dr. Alford Carleton was elected Executive Vice-President of the Board of World Ministries, which combines the overseas mission work of both constituent groups.

At every level of life in the new Church there is a tingle of excitement. The coming together of different traditions has the salutary effect of challenging irrelevancies and trivialities. New voices in conversation produces new insights. The immense sense of an historic new venture, a creative interaction of congregational and presbyterian polity, come into being at a crucial time in human history, overlays all that is said and done. Mere mechanical efficiency or numerical size is no satisfactory rationale for this move; all feel it must prove itself in a new obedience in submission to the Holy Spirit in this time.

The assembly was cheered to learn that the New York State Courts, after patient hearing of the case of those who brought suit to deter the union, had dismissed the entire case against those seeking to enter the United Church.

A sense of Pentecost overhung the General Synod, as, at point after point, communication came into being where it had not heretofore existed. So, trusting that 'God has yet more truth and light to break forth from out His holy word', Congregationalists in the United States enter upon a new venture in pilgrimage.

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A Covenant Fellowship of Churches

In November 1958, the Council of the Congregational Union of England and Wales set up a Commission to include among its studies: 'the relation of our Congregational churches to one another in the Council and Assembly'. The first report of this commission was made to the Assembly of the Union in May 1961, and it was agreed to pass its recommendations to the churches. A decision in principle will be sought at the Assembly of 1962, which if positive will lead to the preparation of a new Constitution for later consideration.

There follow some extracts from the report of the Commission to present the substance of the matter and then some comments made at the Assembly of the Congregational Union of England and Wales by the Rev. W. J. F. Huxtable, Principal of New College, London, and Chairman-Elect of the Union.

Every Congregational Church is a covenant fellowship of Christians in which . . . all members are severally as well as corporately responsible for seeking the mind of Christ for the life of the Church.

While no local Church ought to be separate from other Christian Communions in the same district, differences of conviction about important issues make complete unity at present impossible. While the duty and privilege of being in close and active fellowship with other Christians is accepted unreservedly, we believe it is nevertheless also necessary for Congregational Churches to covenant with one another for the purpose of their distinctive Churchmanship.

Each Congregational Church is already in association with all other Congregational Churches through the County Unions and the Congregational Union of England and Wales. Through the Assembly of the Union and its Council and Committees these Churches seek and receive the guidance of the Holy Spirit in matters affecting the whole fellowship.

The Churches thus associated have no wish to appear as a denomination in distinction from other denominations, or to weaken their own sense of ecumenicity; but since it is not at present possible to gather all Christians into one Church Order it is necessary that Congregational Churches should express in some corporate form their belonging together which is so plainly a fact of their experience.

The Commission is united in the view that the member Churches of the Union should be invited to enter into a covenanted relationship with one another. To twelve members of the Commission it seems right to name this fellowship of Churches. 'The Congregational Church in England and Wales'. To two members of the Commission, however,

this seems to be too serious a departure from our traditional understanding of the word 'Church'. All are agreed that the present name 'The Congregational Union of England and Wales' does not adequately describe or define the present relationship of our Churches.

Commentary by Principal W. J. F. Huxtable

I wish to give the Assembly some indication of how we came to our main suggestions and what we take them to mean. We took the third of our terms of reference (about oversight) first, because we became convinced that what we ought to say about Christian unity and also about the relation of our local Churches one to another ought to arise from our understanding of what Christian oversight is and what it is not. We do not dissent from the Church of England because it believes that oversight is an essential element of the Church's life, but rather because we are not persuaded that this oversight is necessarily or best exercised by an individual, however saintly and able, whether he stand in the apostolic succession or not. That is indeed one form of oversight; and we may have more to learn from it than some of us are at present willing to admit. With us, however, oversight has ever been exercised by Minister, Deacons and Church Meeting, the individual's and the fellowship's responsibilities blending together so naturally and inevitably that it is difficult to disentangle them, even for inspection. We have in fact learned and practised our convictions about oversight in the local church; but increasingly in recent years oversight has been exercised among us by a number of others. Moderators and County Unions, for example, to say nothing of all else that happens through Memorial Hall, have more and more been expected to care for us in a great variety of ways. Churches have less and less wished to 'go it alone', and have often sought—and less frequently, I dare say, accepted—such leadership as has been offered. We have in fact accepted a notion of oversight which is not confined to the local Church; and the Commission has started from this fact. Indeed, I would claim for the whole of this document that you have provided the facts upon which we have worked; we think we have offered a reasonable explanation of them and a clear indication of what they imply, simply by working out the implications of our more recent history.

As to this more general oversight, we wish to say in the first place that it is for the well-being of our Churches. We judge that no one really wishes to return to the days when they cared less for one another than they do now; and even if we did so wish, it is very doubtful

whether it would be possible in the changed economic and social situation in which we now live. I suspect that the more granular independency advocated by *some* of our XVIIth century fathers had at least something to do with their economic circumstances. I do not deny, of course, that it had something to do with the New Testament! Yet they understood that corpus of Christian witness in a fashion no longer possible to us! Be all that as it may, the Commission is in no mood to go back on this wider oversight which our Churches have accepted almost entirely without formal argument. Who can doubt that the mutual care of our Churches for one another is of God?

We wish, however, to record our convictions about the nature of this oversight and the way in which it should be exercised and received. 'It is an attempt to express (Christ's) rule and care through the offices and officers of His Church': therefore, those who exercise such oversight do so by persuasion, not coercion. This oversight seeks to be the instrument of the only thing that in the end really matters about our Churches, that Christ should reign in the midst of his people and work through them.

Such oversight, we claim, is needed to do justice to a fundamental part of the Church's structure. We are not dealing with an *ad hoc* expedient, merely, but an essential part of Christ's provision for the life of His people. Just as a local Church is a fellowship and not an haphazard collection of individuals, so a Congregational Union—to call it that for the moment—is a fellowship of Churches and not a casual nexus of local congregations. There are, I know, some who will say that this is a new doctrine. (I am not sure whether this is actually so, for I think it can be clearly shown that from John Owen onwards there has been this understanding of the fellowship of the Churches in our tradition of churchmanship; but we are not here to argue the point merely on a matter of historical judgement, about which there are certainly two opinions). The issue before our people is not whether this is new, but whether it is true, whether we are not being asked to make more explicit what has been implicit for at least thirty years or more, whether through the very conditions in which our work has now to be done we are not being led to a truer and deeper understanding of the nature of church-fellowship than we have held hitherto.

How are we to express it in life and organisation?

In seeking to answer this question, we have tried to avoid what we took to be pitfalls. We say, for instance, that we do not desire to appear as a Denomination in distinction from other Denominations. We do not, that is, intend to become a sect, when it has been given to us to say something vital about the nature of the Church Universal. Indeed,

it may be that in the very proposals we bring before you now we are feeling our way to something that will be of value to Christian folk far beyond our immediate circle. Yet we have to live in the world as it is; and since we cannot at the moment gather all Christians into One Church Order, we must find some way in which to express in some corporate form that belonging together which is so plainly part of our Churches' experience. We do not recommend, you will observe, any hierarchical gradation of Church courts, so that the local Church becomes subordinate to some superior authority; and we have not in any way sought to set any limits to the proper freedom of the local Church to seek the mind of Christ and order its affairs by the guidance of the Holy Spirit. What we have done is to indicate a way in which the fellowship of Churches might—should—find corporate expression; and we have done so, as we believe, without falling into the pitfalls I have just mentioned by taking up and trying to develop an idea of the Church entirely characteristic of Congregationalism. With us every local Church is either explicitly or implicitly a covenant fellowship. But if individual believers may covenant together in fellowship in a local Church, may not such Churches covenant together in a National or County Union? Might not such a covenant-fellowship relate our Churches to one another with the same curious sense of being at once bound together and yet also in full Christian liberty which we know in our local Churches? The more the members of the Commission considered this the more we were convinced that this provided the answer to this problem of the relation of our Congregational Churches to one another in Council and Assembly. This is fact made explicit what has been implicit for many years. Our Churches are no longer isolated units; nor are they a connection; but they have become more and more a fellowship: let us then say so.

But, some have asked, what would it be like for Churches to enter into covenant with one another? What difference would it make to what we now know? Part of the answer I have already given: it would make perfectly explicit that relation of inter-dependence which has become so marked and welcome a feature of our life. The formal constitution of our Union at present provides for no such rich fellowship as we now enjoy. But there is more to it than this, and I would describe that extra by pointing to the distinction between really being a member of a local Church, and being no more than an occasional worshipper. It is the difference between being committed to one another in a fellowship made possible by Christ, and having no particular responsibility except to drop in when you feel inclined. I look to the day when in the deepest possible sense our Churches shall be committed to one another in

mutual responsibility and service. From one point of view, I dare say, we should still look rather the same, but I am sure that we should all feel different. We should have taken our increasing fellowship to its logical conclusion.

Nor would this mean that our local Churches would have their privileges and responsibilities curtailed. We do not envisage that the local Church will be told what to do. We know only too well what would happen if such a foolish experiment were attempted. What we do envisage is that we should recognise that there are, in fact, three spheres at least in which we are made aware of receiving the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the local Church, the County Union and the National Union. If we face the realities we experience, we do not find any authority for believing that the Holy Spirit loses His power when He wanders to larger Assemblies than the local congregation! Because we know His guidance at the local level we need not try to make Him parochial. Nor do we think, as I said a moment ago, that these three spheres are related in a sort of ascending scale of importance, but as equal spheres. But what if the guidance of these three equal spheres seems to be conflicting? Well, it is known for something like that to happen in the local Church, and what do we then do if the fellowship is really Christian? We go on seeking guidance until we are of one mind. At our best we know that when we start consciously lording it over a minority, ignoring tender consciences, we are at a level lower than Christian fellowship.

If it is possible for members of the local Church to find a common mind under the guidance of the Spirit, or at the very least to respect one another's consciences under His constraint; I cannot see that it is impossible for our Churches to do so as well. Indeed, this does happen already. The Assembly proposed the Home Churches Fund. Nobody forced it on the Churches; yet it has been one of our most successful enterprises. Our Commission envisages neither more nor less than this. As I said earlier—we want to make explicit what already happens.

A Local Church Covenant

Every Congregational Church is a covenant fellowship of Christians in which the preaching of the Word and the administration of the Sacraments are principal means of grace; in which the ministry of the whole Church is normally led by one who is recognised as called thereto by the Lord; and in which the pastoral oversight of the members and the leadership in all kinds of Christian witness and enterprise is shared by the Minister and Deacons. All members are severally as well as corporately responsible for seeking the mind of Christ for the life of the Church.

Such a covenant has been thus worded for the Church at Banstead, Surrey, England.

> We, acknowledging God to be our God and Jesus Christ His Son to be our Lord and the Holy Spirit to be our Guide, commit ourselves to one another to live together in Church order as a company of Christ's people.
>
> We seek to fulfil the will of God, as declared in Scripture, in bearing one another's burdens and sharing each other's joys, in welcoming the stranger and befriending the poor and lonely, in caring for the young and building up our families as part of the great family of God.
>
> We promise to endeavour by prayer, personal service, and conscientious giving to proclaim the Kingdom of God at home and abroad, and to fulfil His will in all human relationships in which we have a part, whether social, economic, or international.
>
> We intend that our Church should be in communion with the Churches of the Congregational order, but seek by God's grace, fellowship with other Churches, especially those of our neighbourhood, working and praying together with them for the unity of Christ's Church in the world.
>
> Finally, we commend ourselves to the whole Church of Christ on earth, and commit ourselves to the Word of God our Father, in the knowledge that He will not leave us or forsake us, and that at the last all will be gathered together in Christ our Redeemer.

The above is an extract from the Report of Commission I of the Congregational Union of England and Wales.

Casa Mia—My Home

MYRNA BUSCHMEYER

I first saw the miracle of Casa Mia when I visited Naples in 1953. The actual building was one of the few left standing after the war in the rubble which had been the Naples waterfront. Outside were swarms of dirty little urchins, climbing over us and our car. But through the gate under the large sign, 'Casa Mia', and inside, were clean, happy, energetic, singing children, learning to be self-sufficient and knowledgeable in both secular and Christian ways.

After the war it was discovered that thousands of the waterfront inhabitants, bombed out of their homes, had fled to the hills and were living in dark, damp caves in conditions of such squalor and overcrowding that tuberculosis was rampant. American doctors studying malnutrition among these people founded the Italian Service Mission to help meet their need, and support of the work was undertaken by

On the way to Casa Mia

the Congregational Christian Service Committee and has become one of the best known mission projects among American Congregationalists.

The Italian Service Mission was in fact formed to reinforce the efforts of the few Protestants in Naples who were trying to feed and heal and serve these war victims. Their leader was Dr. Teofilo Santi. I only wish that this Protestant saint could himself tell Congregationalists everywhere of the work which he has done as director of the mission.

As a son in a Methodist minister's family, Dr. Santi early learned to share and serve, for despite real poverty two orphans became part of their family. Gradually others were added, and the number has been added to during the years until it now totals over 8,000! With the help of American Methodists several moves to larger quarters were made. Then the present orphanage, 'Casa Materna', a former prince's palace, was rebuilt. Several hundred orphans live there now, and many more come daily for school, crafts, recreation and worship. 'Casa Materna' has been directed by a brother and sister of Dr. Santi since their parents died.

All the Santis live together here by the Bay of Naples with several mission workers. Dr. Santi himself practices medicine, specialising in tuberculosis and pediatrics to earn a living. Then he devotes hours daily to free medical clinics at both missions and to administering the programme, at 'Casa Mia' as Director. He has several Italian helpers who work under Hulda Settler, an American girl who has grown from being his volunteer secretary to be his invaluable administrative assistant both in the mission itself and in the warehouse for material aid sent under Church World Service and the Service Committee in the United States. Mrs. Jessie Deale and several American students have been on the staff temporarily to assist with the several hundred children who have two shifts of school and crafts and meals and play. The building is so small and simply equipped that it is wonderful to see their accomplishments. 'Casa Mia', is not an orphanage, nor do people live there, but it is truly 'my home' to the hordes of children who since 1952 have entered through the gate under this sign.

The work has been greatly helped by the American military stationed in Naples. They have given of their surplus food and equipment. Chaplains, enlisted men and officers have arranged parties and given other back-stage assistance. Shipboard parties have been arranged. The climax was the help given to acquire the land needed for the only Protestant hospital in Southern Italy. Congregationalists in the United States also gave money to make this purchase possible. The building has been used as a school building for children of American military.

I came to Naples last Fall in time to attend Sunday Protestant service for military in the basement of the hospital-school. Later I could tell the women why this building had so much meaning for Protestants, and how the rent they were paying for their school made possible the support of four clinics (as a dispersed hospital meanwhile) until the building could be turned back to them for a hospital.

I had chosen to go to Naples and visit Casa Mia, and see how the modern military were still co-operating with these missions. Naples was to be the first of seventeen district rallies of 'Protestant Women of the Chapel', throughout Italy, Germany and France—and at each I was to be the invited guest and speaker.

To tell them of these two missions at their doorstep, and of the long history of co-operation of the military with them, was a thrilling experience. There was also something very stimulating to me in being for a little time part of this Christian mission where 'home' had never been anything but makeshift rubble or the frame of a building, and where religion had been only the superstitious, antiquated Italian Catholic Church. To see hope come alive and Christian qualities

Continued on page 19

Dr. Santi with the children

Adams United Theological School

R. J. McKelvey

Modderpoort, or 'pass of mud'. I doubt if you will find it marked on your map of South Africa. For it can boast of nothing more than a railway station-cum-siding, one shop, a grain silo, and, of course, St. Augustine's Anglican Mission. Five years ago you would have found this quiet eastern Free State Village over-run by gym-frocked and khaki-clad African boys and girls—pupils and students at the mission's schools and teacher training college. But the Bantu Education Act stopped all that, or most of it, for it took over all but primary education out of the hands of the Anglican fathers. Fine and spacious cut-stone buildings stood empty, and beautiful grounds lay unused.

Beginnings

The same Education Act affected the London Missionary Society's work at Tiger Kloof, which became a government institution. Some place had to be found where we could continue the training of our African ministers. Discussion between a number of churches interested in forming a united theological college took place, and early in 1956 the Tiger Kloof Bible School, the Adams Theological Schoool (of the American Board Mission, missionary arm of the Congregational Christian Churches of the U.S.A.), and the Wright School of Religion (of

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Continued from page 18

develop; health and happiness and usefulness grown through the efforts and love of these devoted workers and volunteers, was a wonderful preparation for me.

In the rallies we used the Bible study book 'There came a Woman' (to the well). I kept seeing the stream of women coming to the one pump outside 'Casa Mia', with clothes and children to be washed, and pails to be filled and carried back from this only supply of fresh water for a wide area, to fill their daily needs of physical water. And I remembered inside the mission where healing and teaching and ministering service done in Christ's name was bringing the living water of the Lord to them.

Mrs. Fred S. Buschmeyer is chairman of the Leadership Education Committee of United Church Women, U.S.A.

the American Methodist Episcopal Church) joined to become the Adams United Theological School. Although the union was not as inclusive as had been hoped, and the early withdrawal of A.M.E. participation made it even more modest, it was nevertheless a very happy one. Bechuana and Zulu students trained together, and American and British staff pooled their resources.

Meantime Adams College, in spite of its determined effort to maintain itself as a private institution free of government control, also came under the hammer of apartheid. The fledgling Adams United Theological School had of necessity to look for a new home. We found one at St. Augustine's Modderpoort, and trekked there from Natal.

For those accustomed to the flat, dry countryside of Tiger Kloof or the humidity of the Natal coast, Modderpoort must have been a refreshing change. Here generous summer rains and winter frosts cool the air and replenish the soil. The countryside shares the hilly terrain of nearby Basutoland and is particularly interesting. Rolling out from our feet in carpet-like fashion are acres of maize, wheat, and pasture. Here and there, nestling at the foot of koppies which dot the countryside like badly-made sandcastles, are homesteads which go back to the days of the Voortrekkers, and not far away from each is a huddle of mud-coated huts which house African farm labourers. And in the distance, just over the border, lie the Basutoland mountains, snow-capped in winter and blue against magnificent evening skies of turquoise.

Objectives

Here our students prepare themselves for the ministry. They come from varying backgrounds. Most are teachers, some clerks, others policemen, but all are intensely keen to make the most of the three years at school. Wives (and little ones) come too, and receive training, because we know how much more fruitful a man's ministry can be if his wife also has prepared herself. Courses and text-books are what you would expect to find in any theological college in the United Kingdom, (Greek not excluded!), though adapted to the African scene and tested by an intensive annual field work programme.

Students usually profit more from lectures than private reading, but seminars are encouraging responsible independent thinking. Our beautifully furnished chapel is the heart of our body, and its three daily services are designed to match learning with devotion. Physical needs are not overlooked; routine chores, a three-acre garden, tennis court and soft-ball field keep staff and students fit.

You find new rules and regulations at A.U.T.S. The emphasis is

rather on responsible Christian living. It is a cause of thanksgiving to see theology working itself out in mutual concern and care.

Challenges

Candidates for the ministry are no easier to find in Africa than elsewhere. The number and quality have risen in recent years, but the need still far exceeds the supply. Some possible candidates are naturally deterred by the prospect of low salaries and the consequent hardship. A more formidable deterrent is black nationalism, with its suspicion of Christianity as the supposed supporter of white supremacy. Along with this, we have to contend with the indifference of the newly educated but unchurched Africans, the resurgence of Islam, and the activities of militant pseudo-Christian sects. But this only emphasises the need for a vital and dedicated ministry.

Opportunities

Soon A.U.T.S. will be moving again. Government legislation has declared us a 'black' spot in a 'white' area. But in this there lies a great opportunity. The Congregational, Presbyterian, Methodist and Anglican Churches are all faced by problems of African theological training since the University College at Fort Hare was turned into a 'tribal college'. We may be able to use this occasion of drawing together the fragmented Body of Christ in Africa; the vision of a theological college where students of many churches could train together is once again before us.

I wish that I could write that we were eager to seize the opportunity as God seems to be in offering it. Denominational preferences, personal concerns, and fears about the future have delayed and at times threatened the success of discussions. Bishop L. Newbigin spent some time with us in an attempt to help us, and other representatives of the interested Theological Education Fund of the International Missionary Council will shortly visit South Africa. We thank God that a common mind seems to be emerging. But difficulties still stand in the way. Join with us in prayer that plans, now at a critical stage, will soon be satisfactorily settled.

The Rev. R. J. McKelvey, B.A., M.Th. D.Phil., a graduate of Nottingham University, received his theological training at Paton and Mansfield Colleges; he also holds a degree of Western Seminary, Pittsburgh. A native of Northern Ireland, he joined the London Missionary Society in 1959, and was appointed to the staff of Adams United Theological School, Modderpoort, S. Africa.

Youth Parliament

GUNNAR ISAKSON

The national youth organisation of the Mission Covenant Church of Sweden (SMU) has its annual meeting in June as a part of the general assembly of the Church. During this big conference, always held in Stockholm, all the financial and organisational affairs are dealt with. But the youth leaders have more and more felt the need of time for discussing ideas and aims. Since 1960 it has been possible for them to come together on a different occasion each year. This new meeting is called 'the national Parliament of SMU'. About 100 youth leaders—four or five from the 16 districts besides the national staff—are invited to a weekend-conference, where only the main problems of the inner side of the work are discussed.

This year the Youth Parliament took place in Norrköping, a big industrial city south of Stockholm. The city paid much attention to the conference by an official display of flags and a fine reception in the city hall.

The Rev. Erland Johansson presided and gave in his address many useful views of the tasks of the leaders of local youth clubs. It was followed by group discussions, which then lead to the final plenary session. The opinions were especially controversial concerning the relations to the State and the communal authorities. This problem dominated the SMU-Parliament of this year.

One of the directors of the royal supervisory board for education, Dr. Ragnar Lund, had been invited as lecturer. His subject was: 'The State, the community and the youth organisations'. He pointed out the importance of the opportunity for all people to get liberty and the intelligence to use it. The way to liberty is education. In Sweden the democratic movements—the Labour Movement, the Temperance Movement and the Revival Movement—have given education to the large mass of the people during the last century.

The character of the family is essential when thinking of the children's bringing up, but the parent's situation is now quite different from that of earlier days. The growing urban trend has brought greater difficulties for the family. The school is important of course, but when young people have left it—who is then ready to co-operate with the family? To that question Dr. Lund had only one answer. Nobody could serve

better than the voluntary youth movements, and therefore the State has to support this work. The State is ready to do so. Appreciation of voluntary youthwork is growing, and the support of the State does not mean intervention. The lecturer criticised some communal youth centres, which had competed with the work of the voluntary youth organisations. The work of the commune should not begin until it had become clear that that of the voluntary groups had not been sufficient or effective enough. Only an ideology can support such a work in the right way. And therefore Christian youthwork is extremely important.

A third session paid attention to the contents of Christian education. An address, given by Rev. Karl-Axel Elmquist, had in it much explosive material concerning the attitude of young people facing sexuality, mass-medium and other marks of modern culture and unculture.

The members of the Youth Parliament had a compact programme. Yet they attended two services in the big new Congregational Church of Norrköping, which, in a way completed the hard intellectual activity with spiritual strength and blessing.

The SMU Parliament of 1961 was a kind of national brains trust among the youth leaders within the Covenant Church of Sweden.

The Rev. Gunnar Isakson was formerly a secretary of the S.M.U. He is now minister of the Mission Covenant Church at Norrkoping.

Alternative to War by R. G. Bell (James Clarke, 1959, 2/6d.).

Whatever one thinks about the solution offered by this English Congregational minister to the pacificist-'militarist' dilemma, this is undoubtedly a brilliant presentation of the problem itself. His proposal is that of an organised, disciplined active non-violent Resistance army—every qualifying word here carrying its own importance. This method aims 'to change the mind of the enemy and to bring a reconciliation upon which peace can be built'. Its effectiveness is, of course, a matter of speculation, but it is a most appealing proposal to Christians and well worthy of careful study.

Storm over Kongo, Mission Covenant Church (Stockholm, 1961, 12.50 kr).

A well produced, illustrated and documented account of the Congo situation by members of the Swedish Mission Covenant Church who were themselves involved or went to Congo to understand.

The Family Church by H. A. Hamilton (Independent Press, 1961, 3/-).

A reprint after twenty years of a formative book in the history of Christian education in England. Based on two convictions: that the community is the decisive influence in all education, and that shared activity or dialogue is the surest way for children to learn. Its value remains, tested by many, and still to be discovered by as many.

R.F.G.C.

Communication and the Christian Community

Some extracts from the address to the Assembly of the Congregational Union of England and Wales by its Chairman, the Rev. H. A. Hamilton, in May, 1961.

The Christian community is not a place; it is a relationship. This relationship is the necessary condition for Christian education and the principal and proper agent in Christian evangelism. It is the calling of a Church to become such a community as can be the living Word of God to its neighbourhood.

* * * *

The great betrayal of this generation is that they have not encountered authority in their elders. Not the authority which needs to be imposed by force, but the authority which proceeds from personal criticism. We are only hearing cries for force now because the other and deeper authority is lacking. In a translated poem *The Half Strong* a young man has cried: 'If we are half-strong, it is because you are weak, because you were afraid of us, gave in to us, would not withstand us, could not answer our questions'.

* * * *

The failure in the contemporary adult and especially the adult Christian (for which there are many reasonable explanations, but no sufficient excuse) reinforces the urgency of our educational task—how to create such a Christian company in the local Church that the children and young people in our care are nourished by the Gospel, and those outside feel the living impact of it. . . . The strategic centre of the struggle is the local company of Christian men and women. . . . The primary mission of the local Church is to be such a community as will itself by its worship and its work communicate the Gospel.

* * * *

We are not communicating. We are rejected without being heard. Why are we further from the non-academic than ever, and for the most part, are separate from at-one-ness with the mass of our working fellows as much as by our verbal facility as by their rejection of us as irrelevant? Yet it is in their world that the Christian Community must live and more and more have its being; in the world as it is our God is to be seen at work; in the expanding universe, the affluent society, the world of power politics He is to be known. And there, in this bewildering actual, we are to BE. . .

We must expose ourselves to the new voices and the fashioning hands of our generation. Strange words, strange sounds, strange sights are offered to us. How we resist them! . . . It is so easy to reject; so hard to receive. So tempting to prejudge; so demanding to try to understand. Yet surely we must expose our minds to the bewilderment, the bitterness, and the bravado with which the playwright, the poet and the painter, tell out their response to the contemporary scene. Those who are articulate may well reveal to us the needs of the dumb. To say no more, we cannot afford to be ignorant of the influences which fashion the taste of our children. How can we help to interpret what we will not even take seriously?

* * * *

Most of all, if we are to be a community set in the world, we must expose ourselves to the need of persons in our world. How shut away we can easily be from the sight of the open wound and the cry of the lonely heart. We see—but as through a glass darkly. We hear, but not face to face. A report tells us of the promiscuity of the barely adolescent —we are shocked; we whisper to each other; we hold a conference. But who is to move out of these separating circles of prudery and professional inquiry; who is to go where they are and restore to them a belief in the joy of human love and the simple beauty of sex within it? Who, if not the body of Christ?

We read of unrest in industry, of lightning strikes, of working to rule. Readily we may pass our judgement. Yet these may be as surely the frustrated cries of men who think they are not heard, as the rebellion of our own children may be evidence of the burdensome pressure of our insensitiveness to their need. How far we seem to be away from them; how good that once again the Church is seeking the way to be at one with their needs as persons.

How can we speak or act as a Christian community with the authority of Christ, unless we expose ourselves to the victims of power politics—whether in Leopoldville, or Laos? Unless we feel the pangs of hunger as we contemplate the starvation of the world, not in terms of figures but of mothers unable to satisfy their babies and helpless against disease?

Or what do we know, in the warmth of our Christian fellowship of the loneliness round about us, the loneliness of the old, rejected and forgotten; the more terrifying loneliness of the young—longing to matter and not knowing how. Loneliness so raw that it resists any touch?

The Rev. H. A. Hamilton was at one time Secretary of the Youth and Education Department of the Congregational Union of England and Wales, and later Principal of Westhill Training College. He is now minister of Union Church, Brighton.

Adventures in Reading

MARGERY FITTS

In our Congregational Christian Churches here in the United States, a new interest in the reading of worthwhile books is burgeoning through the stimulus of 'Adventures in Reading'.

This programme is the result of the 'concern' of a number of Massachusetts women more than thirty years ago. It was felt that too many of our men and women were not reading at all, or were content with the lightweight and ephemeral. As a consequence, in the tradition of Congregationalism which has always emphasised education and enlightenment, a small pamphlet of suggested titles was published.

Thus 'Adventures in Reading' got its start. Today it is issued by the National Fellowship of Congregational Christian Women and the National Laymen's Fellowship, and consists of two booklists, Part I brought out February 1st each year, and Part II appearing six months later. The lists are long and varied containing more than 300 titles annually in twelve classifications, including The Bible, Worship and Devotional Life, Religious Thought, Current Issues, History, Travel, Science, Poetry, Biography and Fiction. The number of copies of the list published has grown annually, the latest figures, for the 1961 issue, being 70,000.

Although ours is a National List, not all states use it, and three states publish their own. They vary, furthermore, in their methods of distribution and use. Some include supplementary choices of older books or books for children, while others give credit for consistent reading of denominational periodicals such as 'The United Church Herald'.

By citing what is done in my own state, Massachusetts, I can given an idea of how this programme is administered. Here we consider 'Adventures in Reading', not only as a guide to contemporary literature, but also as a programme which rewards achievement. It is *not* a contest between individuals or Churches, although it counts the number of readers and the number of books read from the list. We say that a person 'qualifies' by reading at least one book from each of the four main groups into which the list is divided. A Church itself 'qualifies' by reporting ten or more readers. Some of our groups meet for reviews and discussion, and this is encouraged. Each participating Church has a Chairman of 'Adventures in Reading' whose duties include the distribu-

tion of the lists, the making of reports, the acquisition of books, their circulation and publicity.

The books which are included in the lists are selected by a National Committee consisting of seventeen members, nine Active (all from Massachusetts) and eight Corresponding (from Rhode Island to Hawaii). In evaluating the books, the committee is ever watchful for offensive passages, thus, unfortunately, ruling out a good deal of today's fiction. The committee also asks, 'Is it too expensive? Is it too localised, too specialised, too difficult?' (Those books of a decidedly serious nature are marked with an asterisk.)

A positive statement, summing up the guiding principles in book selection, might read, 'Those which are wholesome and interesting; those which are inspirational and helpful, whether they be religious books, biography or fiction; those which are sincere in their quest for truth, and those which are well-written, combining beauty of thought with beauty of expression—these, in combination, form the type of book the committee rates as worthy of a place on 'Adventures in Reading'.

Reading is imperative to our understanding of the world in which we live. Life in mid-twentieth century requires that we be men and women of sound thinking and broad knowledge. The best thought of today, as well as the wisdom of past ages, lies in books and we neglect it to our peril. In the words of Mark Twain 'The man who does not read good books has no advantage over the man who can't read them'.

Mrs. A. M. Fitts, Jnr., is Past Chairman of Education for the Massachusetts Women's Fellowship, secretary of the National Committee on 'Adventures in Reading', member of the National Women's Fellowship Tour to Britain, 1959.

Christians of the Copperbelt by John Taylor and Dorothea Lehmann (S.C.M., 1961, 16/-).

Another 'must' for all concerned for the development of the Christian Church and the service of the Christian mission in Africa—and not least Congregationalists. There is strong criticism of the Missions for their failure to develop an indigenous ministry and any sense that the Church belongs to the people: it is still the mission. 'We have been converting people to Christianity, but have we been forming a new Christian society?' 'Africans judge their Church by its effectiveness as a social institution'. 'There is a growing disillusionment towards Christianity especially among young people . . . and especially for its failure to practise brotherhood'. 'Christianity is beginning to be regarded as an agency for weakening African resistance'. 'The African minister is regarded as belonging to the pattern of the Western Missionary activity, and not really to the African Church'. 'If the Church is to respond to the total situation it can do so only as a single fellowship embracing both races'. 'Many Africans are more at home in an exclusively white world than they are among the simpler people of their own race'. These and like judgements make one think. R.F.G.C.

ROTTERDAM, 1962

Euromast: Rotterdam

SPEAKERS

Principal H. Cunliffe-Jones, D.D., *England*

Principal C. S. Duthie, D.D., *Scotland*

Rev. A. Leonard Griffith, *England*

Dr. James M. Gustafson, *U.S.A.*

Prof. Dr. G. J. Hoenderdaal, *Netherlands*

Principal W. J. F. Huxtable, *England*

Mr. W. S. Kilpatrick, *W.C.C.*

Drs. H. M. de Lange, *Netherlands*

Dr. W. B. J. Martin, *U.S.A.*

Prof. Paul S. Minear, LL.D., *W.C.C.*

Pres. Robert V. Moss, Ph.D., *U.S.A.*

Dr. W. R. M. Noordhoff, *Netherlands*

Prof. Dr. H. S. Nordholt, *Netherlands*

Dr. Roger Pilkington, *England*

Prof. Lucien Rimbault, *France*

Prof. Roger Shinn, D.D., *U.S.A.*

Dr. Russell H. Stafford, *U.S.A.*

Rev. K. A. E. Sundstrom, *Sweden*

Mrs. Dr. H. Verwey-Jonker, *Netherlands*

The Free Church of Finland

(*Suomen Vapaakirkko*)

Usko Waismaa

It is not easy to determine the precise beginning of the Finnish Free Church movement. Revivals occurred in various parts of the country in the 19th century. The most important of these broke out in the autumn of 1879 when Lord Radstock, an English revivalist, held a series of meetings in Helsinki. The following ten years saw continuous revivals over the whole country. The essence of their doctrine was that when a man surrenders himself to God in faith, God justifies him and he gets assurance of the forgiveness of sins and knows the joy of salvation.

The question of the doctrine was not however in the foreground in the Free Church movement. The Word of God was searched diligently both privately and in common Bible reading, and believers began to ask whether the Lord's Supper did not belong only to them. So there came into existence small Holy Communion unions. Soon they began also to realise that according to the New Testament a Christian congregation consisted only of believing members. After this the detached Communion unions began to be formed into free congregations.

There was no intention to separate from the Lutheran Church, but the pastors did not hold that a Lutheran Church could include free congregations. The movement therefore, was disowned, and so the free congregations took firmer shape.

The Free Church movement was still scattered and unorganised. One result was that many converts went over to the Methodists, Baptists and to the Salvation Army. The idea that the Free Church movement might unite all real believers in our country proved to be too optimistic. This compelled the movement to organise itself in 1889. The first organisation was very weak and it could not prevent a schism, caused by a 'holiness' movement. In 1894 the Free Church movement got a tighter organisation and became a union of congregations, called the Finnish Free Mission.

The Free Church movement early lost its most remarkable leader when Hjalmar Braxen died at the age of 49 in 1909. Five years earlier the chairmanship of the central committee had passed into the hands of Emil Saraoja, an engineer, and subsequently a professor. At that time the s hare of the laity was notable, and some university-bred men

devoted themselves to be Free Church pastors. Among these were Eskil Renfors, director of the Pastor's School and Kaarlo Waismaa, a teacher there and editor of *Suomen Viikkolehti*. The school functioned in Tampere from 1905 to 1920.

The decade 1911-1921 was a time of lively activity. A new period of revivals began especially among the Finnish speaking peoples. The new activity took place in the main in the name of Christian Endeavour union, which was established in Finland within the Free Mission and remained within it. Associations grew more rapidly than the congregations, which caused difficulty, because there was not any united leadership. The converts remained in the associations and did not become members of the congregations. The C.E. movement in Finland thus lost its original aim: For Christ and the congregation.

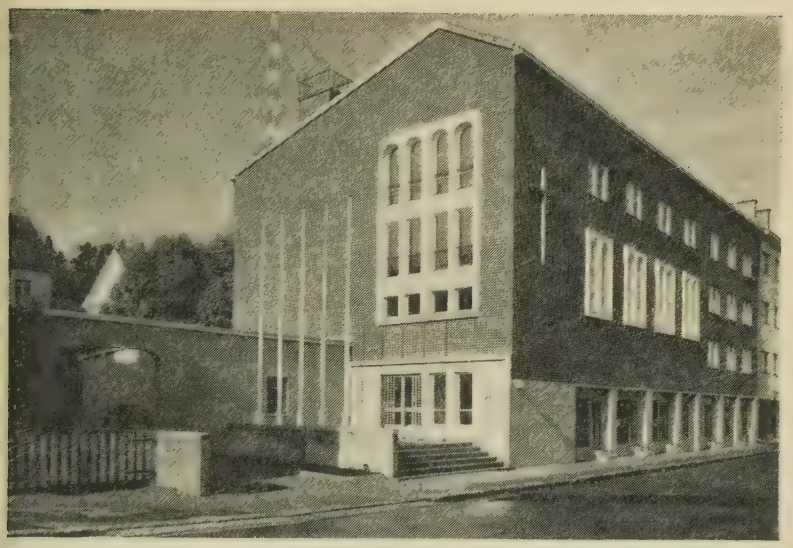
In 1921 the Swedish speaking elements in the Finnish Free Mission separated from the Finnish ones and established a separate organisation: Free Mission Covenant. At that time the chairmanship of the central committee moved from Professor E. Sarajo to S. S. Salmensaari, a School Councillor. He was one of the generation of students who in the 1890's had dedicated themselves to the calling of free preachers. In the succeeding decade he was made secretary of missions. With greater clarity than anyone else, he followed Braxen's evangelical theology. In 1908 he became a state educational official but continued to participate in Free Mission work. His patriarchal phase in the chief leadership of the Free Church began in 1921 and lasted until 1954.

At the first uni-lingual annual meeting of the Free Mission in 1922 it was unanimously adopted that the Free Mission should be registered as a religious body. In 1923, when the law relating to religious freedom became operative, the Finnish Free Church launched its activities. The following year the C.E. Union proclaimed itself the youth association of the Free Church and thus a troublesome confusion was clarified.

With the legalisation of the Free Church of Finland the following declaration of faith was adopted:

(1) We are Christians, who, according to the Bible and in accordance with the Apostolic Creed, endeavour to live and work for the reviving and maintaining of Christian life.

(2) The Bible which we believe to be written by men moved by the Holy Spirit, is acknowledged as the only rule of our faith, and in accordance with which all doctrine and practices in the Church are to be either accepted or rejected.



Newest Church in Lahti

(3) In order to realise the Christian unity and fellowship which the New Testament teaches, we do not require anything else for Church Membership except a living faith in Jesus Christ, the Son of God, and the professing of that faith before men.

(4) In accord with this Declaration we have united our churches as in the practice of Biblical Church life and missionary work as an expression of our Christian conviction.

According to this declaration, the congregations of the Free Church of Finland are congregations of professing believers. Others, however, may be accepted as minors and as so-called passive members. When after the legalisation of free congregations, many of their members did not separate from the Lutheran State Church, it became necessary in many congregations to make arrangements for a fourth group, so-called associate members.

When the Free Church was established it had only 46 ordinary members, 163 minors, 11 passive members and 954 associate members. Ten years later the total membership was 5,145, and 30 years later 8,911. At the present time there are 64 congregations, of which 19 have been registered under provisions of the religious liberty law.

The most noticeable events after the war were the new organisation of youth work, and the establishment of a People's High School at Santala. The C.E. designation was discarded and a new union, known as Suomen Vapaakirkon Nuoret (The Youth of the Free Church of Finland) was formed to include the associations of the young people, the junior work and the Sunday Schools. This meant a movement from association activity to deeper congregational consciousness.

In recent years two doctrinal questions have been subjects of lively discussion. One is the action of the Holy Spirit and especially of His signs and gifts, and the other is the doctrine of baptism. Because adult baptism is predominant in the Free Church it has been held that baptism should be the gate to membership and that freedom in this matter cannot be tolerated. The Free Church of Finland, however, still keeps to the principle that we do not require anything else for Church membership except a living faith in Jesus Christ.

The strength of the Free Church has been an extensive revival work directed outwards. Wide circles have been touched by its evangelistic work. This activity has had a marked influence both on other free evangelical groups and on the Lutheran Church.

The weakness of the Free Church has been that it has not been able to keep all those converted through its activity. The junior and Sunday school work has been too little appreciated. Recently the members of the congregations have, however, awakened to see better the importance of youth work. The numbers of our youth have increased every year and this will be a more notable factor in the Free Church.

The Free Mission began its mission-work in China in 1891 and in North India in 1895. In India the mission has worked among the Tibetans. Now the Free Church has missionaries at Ghoom near Darjeeling and in Baksa-Duar on the boundary of Bhutan. In the course of years 29 missionaries have been sent to India, of which eight made their last resting place in the soil of India.

In 1957 the Free Church began mission work in French Congo, now Republic of Congo, on the field of the Mission Covenant Church of Sweden. Six missionaries have already prepared themselves for this field. The foreign mission is advancing and many young people are willing to follow the call of our Lord to the mission fields.

Mr Usko Waisman, LL.B., is Moderator of the Free Church of Finland and a member of the Executive Committee of the I.C.C.

S. S. Salmensaari

Sulo Santeri Salmensaari, the first moderator of the Free Church of Finland, was born in 1874. After his matriculation he studied in London at Harley College in the year 1896-97. He passed his B.A. in Finland and acted for many years as the principal of a reformatory and later on as the chief inspector of child welfare at the ministry for social affairs. His last position was the chief of section for alcohol and temperance affairs, from which he retired in 1941.

After being converted at 18 years of age he devoted himself to walk with the free evangelical movement. He worked at first as minister and then as secretary of the Free Mission for six years. After that he was also a member of the Central Committee of the Free Mission until the establishment of the Free Church of Finland in 1923.

In the setting up of the Free Church, S. S. Salmensaari played a decisive part. The declaration of faith and the regulations of the Free Church of Finland are the result of his skilful preparation. It was a matter of course that he should become the first Moderator of the Free Church, which post he held for 31 years.

In his Christian preaching S. S. Salmensaari has stood firm on the base of the word of God. He has before all been a representative of an active and serving practical Christianity of which sacrifice and self-denial are an essential part.

Characteristic of the activity and work of S. S. Salmensaari has been straightness. Even in stormy days S. S. Salmensaari has unshakenly steered the Free Church according to its confession and principles. As a man of absolute principles he has won the reverence of even those who in some things disagree with him.

Even at the age of 86 years S. S. Salmensaari alertly follows the activities of the Free Church of Finland and often takes his pen to the principles, which are to him so dear and of such high value.

Usko Waismaa

Robert Browne

"The shop of our store and the steel of our strength"

CHARLES E. SURMAN

For a long period Robert Browne enjoyed the proud posthumous title of 'the Father of English Congregationalism', but in recent years there has been pronounced reaction against any such claim, notably on the western side of the Atlantic. He has been denigrated as an arrant intruder to whose peculiar brand of acrimonious Separatism our polity owes nothing.

An enigmatical figure he certainly is for those who like precisely dated biography and consistent thought and action. (See C. E. Surman's *The Enigma of Robert Browne* in the *British Weekly*, London, May 8, 1950). We now know that he was buried October 8th, 1633, at St. Giles's, Northampton, but the year of his birth remains only conjecturally as 1550. Of his early life and schooling, presumably in Rutlandshire or near by, nothing is known. He was admitted a student at Cambridge, graduating B.A. in 1572, and in the pronounced Puritan atmosphere then distinguishing that University his radical bent developed. He taught school 'for the space of three years' and also exercised his mind 'to search and find out the matters of the church', and by his dissatisfaction with the existing order drew down the wrath of authority upon him and was discharged. He went back to Cambridgeshire and began to preach, although not holding episcopal licence.

With his University friend, Robert Harrison, he then formed a 'Gathered Church' in Norwich in 1580 and preached actively in Norfolk and Suffolk. In 1581 he was again in trouble with the authorities and suffered the first of many imprisonments. He opposed the emigration of his congregation but later in the year joined them and Harrison in Holland. It was here, at Middelburg, in the following year that his three major published works appeared: 'A Treatise of Reformation without tarying for anie,' 'A Treatise vpon the 23. of Matthewe', and 'A Booke which sheweth the life and manners of all true Christians'.

After dissension in the Middelburg congregation Browne returned to England in 1584 and suffered further imprisonment for writing 'An Answere to Master Cartwright'. At this time he suddenly signed a subscription acknowledging the authority of the archbishop and

promising to live orderly, a seeming betrayal of his expressed convictions against the episcopal hierarchy. He was not freed from controversy or animadversion, however. To the end of his life, although he was allowed to teach school again, consented to be ordained in the Church of England in 1591 and became Rector of Little Casterton, Rutland and of Achurch-cum-Thorpe Waterville, Northants, in that year, he was almost as embarrassing to the Anglican authorities in his qualified conformity as he had been before, with much bickering about such matters as his non-use of the cross in baptism, not wearing a surplice, omitting parts of the Prayer Book liturgy, and for discipline of recalcitrant parishioners in refusing to baptise the children of non-attenders at church or to admit notorious evil-livers to the Lord's Supper. But as a country parish minister he was 'practically buried' and even as a controversialist almost forgotten.

In 1631 he was excommunicated and deprived of his livings for contumacy and in August 1633 was literally 'carted-off' to Northampton gaol on his feather bed and there died a few weeks later.

That his inconsistencies were due to insanity has often been asserted, but this seems by no means proven. He was a stormy petrel, contentious, obstinate, highly independent, infuriating to those in authority, and doggedly opposed to everything he deemed an encroachment on the spiritual liberty of Christian individuals or communities or an attack on the 'crown rights of the Redeemer': so much is undisputed. If the torch he lighted flickered in the bitter winds of persecution, that was not necessarily pathological. Committal to thirty-two imprisonments, some of them in places where 'he could not see his hand at noon-day', would hardly make for physical or mental tranquility. Sentimentally it would of course be easier to honour him had he been faithful unto death, but not all are made for final martyrdom, nor do adversaries always call for a death penalty.

Time-server, hypocrite and coward we think he was not. Renegade he seemed to some in his abandonment of the campaign against the Anglican authorities and corruption in the Church, but even under submission he was unable to fit the Procrustean couch and made a restless bed-fellow. It seems possible, too, that like others he mellowed with age, and that his extreme position was in part modified by slight, slow, yet perceptible change in the ecclesiastical set-up arising from his own and other would-be reformers' vehement protests. 'Discipline,' which occasioned so much trouble for him and others, was to become a watchword in church life for a century to follow: there were some who did set about 'Reformation without tarying' and from whom it was perhaps less necessary to urge total Separation.

What remains to be asked is whether other generations were right in seeing in this man the one who first enunciated the principles which have been basic for later Independent-Congregationalists. Were Douglas Horton and Verne D. Morey right, for example, when they claimed (in Dr. Horton's words):

> 'This important monograph might have been entitled "Goodbye Mr. Browne", for it definitively and finally bows Robert Browne out of Congregationalism. He has been regarded as the first Congregationalist for a long time. Historians have asked each other how such an unstable man would have been the founder of so stable a polity as Congregationalism. Today we know the answer to their question: he was not'. (The monograph is *History Corrects Itself* in *Bulletin of American Congregational Association, Jan.* 1954).

This summary dismissal of him from our lineage is based on the postulate that "any person who equates Congregationalism with Separatism may be considered to have a blind spot on his historical retina'. At the risk of being thought myopic, we suggest that it is not a question of equation but of development. Brownism is not identical with later Congregationalism any more than Judaism equals Christianity. To plead that they are not akin because they are not identical is to suggest that because an acorn is not an oak they have nothing in common. The differences may be readily conceded while the germinal indebtedness remains. We can no more expunge the name of Robert Browne from our Congregational story than we can that of Moses from the New Testament. Dr. G. F. Nuttall rightly says, 'With the Brownists . . . we have not reached Congregationalism but only its prehistory' and he adds that while the Congregational Way 'often ran parallel with the Brownists' path it was not a projection of it'. (*Visible Saints*, pp. 76). Browne was undoubtedly the man in whom 'English religious Separatism became vocal' (Morey, p. 9), and in that context even his contemporaries were ready to grant him primacy. Stephen Bredwell, his avowed enemy, wrote:

> 'None among them can justly take the garland from Robert Browne . . . And albeit new masters are risen among them, that now in a fresh, hot mood, condemn his coldness and volorable dealing, and that worthily, yet they must, even Barrow and Greenwood with the rest, acknowledge him the shop of their store and the steel of their strength'. (*Rasing*, 1588, A1, r.et v.).

To argue that Congregationalism has never been Separatist seems wilfully to ignore historic fact. In England at all events Dissent and Nonconformity have been inevitably to some degree Separatist *vis-a-vis*

the Established Church. Modern concern for ecumenicity ought not to blind us to the fact that in practice Congregationalists have often been unwilling schismatics. Browne was no advocate of Separation for Separation's sake; only of withdrawal from things and policies un-Christian. His stressing of those tenets which became cardinal for Congregational co-operation is clear—though not to be found where it is often and only sought, in his 'Treatise of Reformation'. Compare the following, for example:

> 'There be Synods or the meetings of sundry churches: which are when the weaker churches seek help of the stronger, for deciding or redressing of matters: or else the stronger look to them for redress'. (*A Booke which sheweth*, D3 verso).

> 'Therefore the meetings together of many churches, also of every Whole church, & of the elders therein, is above the Prophet, the Evangelist, the Pastor, the Teacher and every particular Elder. For the joining & partaking of many churches together, & of the authority which many have, must needs be greater and more weighty than the authority of any single person.' (*True & Short Declaration*, A2 recto).

The much-protested central factor in English Congregationalism, the authoritative place and power of the Church Meeting, finds its definition also:

> 'The Church meetings are the due resorting and coming together of Christians, for mutual comfort by their presence, and communion of graces to further all godliness'. (*A Booke which sheweth*, I3 recto).

This is not a statement, be it noted, that a Church Meeting is a democratic assembly where all the minutiae of Church provenance are decided! Browne's agreed Covenant with his Church in Norwich if translated into current terminology is not far from the implied basis upon which most of our fellowships are still grounded and must not be overlooked by those moved to re-examine Covenant in England today. (For the full text of this Covenant, see *True & Short Declaration*, C2 verso, reproduced in *Peel & Carlson*, pp. 422f.).

Here are stated the explicit fundamentals of Congregational church polity: a covenanted fellowship of believers, an elected ministry and order of Church officers, regular worship and teaching, freedom of speech and the right to discipline (with subjection to it), evangelism, and consultation with other Churches. For their clear enunciation we remain debtors to Robert Browne, despite his schismatical tendencies. He was a 16th century 'Angry Young Man', his nascent idealism in

rebellion against stubborn tradition and vested clerical interest, driven to the costly expedient of Separation by their inertia. Browne the Separatist was his own worst enemy and wounded friends as well as enemies. We may deplore his methods and refuse many items of his contemporary concern or adjudge some emphases to be too strong, yet that does not cancel our indebtedness to the one who gave emphatic and cogent expression to certain radical truths which neither the Church nor the Churches can ignore in any century. If we discover and develop his recognition of ecumenicity, it must not be to lose sight of local responsibilities for purity and grace, of our stewardship in fundamental freedoms and autonomies; nor is it to disallow his stress that Christ and He only is the Head of His Church and not Apostle, Pope, Archbishop, Monarch, President, State or any priestly-ministerial order.

> 'In all things we must first look, what is the Lord's will and charge, and then what is the will of man'. (*Treatise of Reformation*, A4 verso).

> 'Church governors are persons receiving their authority & office of God, for the guiding of his people the Church, received and called thereto by due consent and agreement of the Church'. (*A Booke which sheweth*, I4 verso).

Our thanks for the reminder, and for much else in the New Testament to which you send us back, Robert! We are eternally your debtor, even if time has made some ancient good uncouth.

* * * *

The Writings of Robert Harrison and Robert Browne, ed Albert Peel and Leland H. Carlson (London, 1953) gives verbatim text of his works, though without commentary, and carries an extended bibliography. The best biographical study of the man is perhaps that of Dwight C. Smith, "Robert Browne, Independent", in Church History (Berne, Indiana, Dec., 1937). The judgements of Champlin Burrage, F. Ives Cater, T. G. Crippen, H. M. Dexter, Wm. Haller, M. M. Knappen, Geo. W. Owen, Albert Peel, Wm. Pierce, F. J. Powicke, Williston Walker, etc., are worthy of consultation.

Note that in the article above spellings have been modernised.

The Rev. Charles E. Surman, M.A., F.R.Hist.S., is an English Congregational minister and lately Research Secretary of the Congregational Historical Society.

NEWS ROUND THE WORLD

Australia

The President of the Congregational Union of Australia, Mr. Maynard Davies, visited Western Australia where he attended the annual state Assembly in May and toured in the country areas. The Secretary of the Union has been to Canberra where a Congregational Lay Preachers' Association has been established to meet local needs.

The call of the Canberra Church to the Rev. Horace S. Read has been accepted. Mr. Read will conclude his five-year period of service as the Secretary of the Congregational Union of New South Wales and expects to commence his ministry at Canberra in February 1962.

The meetings of the Joint Commission on Church Union (Congregationalists, Presbyterians and Methodists) are continuing. Matters concerning the theological background against which the basis of union will be prepared are now nearly completed. The Commission must pay attention next to a draft basis of union.

N.C.W.

British Guiana

Fifty-four members of the Women's Union attended a Residential Conference in April. Special emphasis was laid on the value of Christian home life. It was held in the Teachers' Training College, Georgetown. Mrs. C. Stallan, President of the Union was leader.

The Rev. Noah Evans has resigned after service for some years in Fyrish. A minister from England will probably serve for six months' special duty next year.

Canada

The placing of young ordinands in their first charge is the task of the transfer committee of the United Church. When the committee met in May it faced a need for 200 and a supply of just over 100. Young ministers are consulted as to their choice of place to serve, but very many ask to be used just where the need is. The salary of a young ordinand is $3,650, a free furnished house, car allowance, pension and insurance, and a month's annual vacation.

The United Church is soon to enter its first new missionary sphere of service since it accepted responsibilities in the Copperbelt in Northern Rhodesia in 1953. The new work will be in Brazil and will be its first in South America, although substantial missionary work has been carried on in Trinidad for ninety-three years. The mission in Brazil will be in co-operation with the Methodist Church there. Three ministers and an agricultural missionary are being sought for 1962.

At a meeting of the Toronto Conference recently, a resolution was passed urging the General Council of the United Church to invite the Presbyterian Church in Canada to consider a merger. There are about 200,000 Presbyterians and about 1,000,000 members of the United Church.

Ralph C. Young, Secretary of the United Church's Board of Men for the past ten years, has been named secretary of the Department of the Laity, World Council of Churches, in succession to the Rev. Hans Ruedi Weber.

The Rev. Dr. C. E. Silcox who died in May, will be remembered particularly for his book, 'Church Union in Canada'. He was from the Congregational part of the United Church.

E.E.L.

Czecho-Slovakia

The Annual Conference of the Unity of Czech Brethren (Congregational) was held in Prague in May. The Revs. B. Benes and J. Michal were-re-elected chairman and secretary and a new Council was chosen for three years.

England and Wales

The Annual Assembly of the Congregational Union of England and Wales unanimously elected Principal John Huxtable Chairman for 1962-3, a fitting recognition of his leadership in connection with the Tercentenary in 1962 of the Great Ejectment of non-conforming ministers. The Associate-Secretary of the I.C.C. represented the Union at the European Laymen's Conference at Bossey (Geneva) and at the Christian Peace Congress at Prague (where he was happy to make contact with the leaders of the Czech-Slovakian Congregational Church), and at the Annual Assembly of the Welsh Independents.

The annual consultation with Palatinate Church leaders took place this year in London—the themes being Church and Community, and the German Church theses on the Lord's Supper. In July two delegations from England attended conferences at Ebernburg (Palatinate), the one on Christian Service in Europe today, the other on Church and Education.

Dr. C. H. Dodd has been made a Companion of Honour by the Queen in recognition of his Chairmanship of the New English Bible translation-commission. Prof. George Phillips has retired from Northern Congregational College, Manchester. The Rev. Martin Shepherd has been appointed Moderator of the North East Province and the Rev. Charles Haig Moderator of the Western Province.

G.J.

Ireland

At the Annual Assembly of the Irish Union in May, held in Donegall St. Congregational Church, Belfast, the Rev. G. Bembridge, B.A., B.D., was inducted as Chairman of the Union, and the Rev. John Stewart was appointed as Chairman-elect. Mr. J. M. Laughlin and the Rev. J. M. Henry, B.A., B.D., were re-elected Treasurer and Secretary respectively.

One of the main issues engaging the attention of the Assembly was that of possible union with the Presbyterians. Negotiations have been taking place for some time, but are as yet in the very early stages.

J.M.H.

Jamaica

The Eighty-fifth Annual Assembly of the Congregational Union was held at Clarendon College, Chapelton, from April 4th-6th. This was a very good Assembly as it was particularly rich in spiritual blessings. The need had been

felt for placing more emphasis on the devotional side of Assembly and with that in mind the Rev. Morrieston Lord conducted a devotional session each afternoon and preached at each of the evening meetings.

On the business side the Assembly took a significant decision. A strong Commission was set up to look into various aspects of the work with a view to strengthening the Union. Among the matters the Commission will go into are: Recruitment for the Ministry, the Constitution, Finance and Revival.

The Officers were all re-elected, and so the Rev. W. E. Maxwell, the Rev. S. A. Webley and Mr. C. L. Stuart of Clarendon College continue as Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer respectively.

S.A.W.

Netherlands

A wish of many years has been fulfilled by the installation of Rev. and Mrs. den Broeder as directors of the conference-and-retreat centre of the Remonstrant Brotherhood, 'de Hoorneboeg', in Hilversum. More and more we needed permanent leadership in this place especially as we want to have more meetings and courses there not only for ministers but also for lay-people for training in special responsibilities in the life of the Church.

After 15 years of excellent service as secretary of the Brotherhood Dr. William R. M. Noordhoff retired as such. We all are greatly in debt to him for the efficiency and devotion which were characteristic of his comprehensive secretarial work. As his successor we welcome the Rev. G. Bloemendaal, minister of our Church in Delft. We are glad that we may profit still of Dr. Noordhoff's gifts as minister of our Church in Rotterdam.

We rejoice at the new Church of Hengelo in an important industrial growing centre in the eastern part of Holland.

The general Assembly of the Brotherhood made many objections against the proposed basis of the World Council of Churches. The objections of one-sidedness against the present basis expressed by the Brotherhood in Evanston and before are not taken away, nor the fear of an undesirable confessionalism. Nevertheless the Assembly was unanimous that we want to stay with our sister churches in the ecumenical fellowship.

H. de K.

New Zealand

The past six months have shown some advance and new life among the churches. Three ministers have come to us from Britain; for them we are grateful. The Rev. Peter Threapleton has come to the church in Timaru. Its building has been sold and the church must now find a new site and build again. The Rev. Stuart Jackman, well known in Britain and South Africa, comes to minister to the Beresford Street Church, Auckland. His influence there includes not only the local work but the whole denominational witness. The Rev. David Evans arrived in June to the Pacific Islanders' Congregational Church at Tokoroa, where there has not been a full-time pastor for the Island people. The Islanders in Hastings have appointed a part-time lay pastor to oversee the work in Hawkes Bay.

Regular services are being held in three new places: Papatoetoe (south of Auckland city) where a house and section have been brought; Te Atatu (north

of Auckland city); and Porirua East (north of Wellington city). There are plans for rebuilding the church at Ravensbourne, Dunedin, extensions to United Church, Dunedin, the Pacific Islanders' Church building in Auckland, a manse for the new minister at Tokoroa, a new manse at Lower Hutt—and so on.

The churches have been considering closely the first draft of a Proposed Basis of Union. Much amendment seems to be needed in the sections on polity, baptism and the ministry.

Our next Assembly will be held in Wellington in October when the Church Union discussions will be continued and further integration of mission and church will take place. Meanwhile we watch with interest the consequences of the recent Pacific Conference of churches and missions in the Pacific, especially the proposal to found a united Theological College in Fiji.

G.G.E.

Scotland

The Assembly of the Scottish Congregational Union was held this year in Glasgow. Both of its chief officers contributed largely to its success; the Rev. J. B. Proudfoot, its Chairman of business sessions, by his good-tempered efficiency, and the Rev. Geraint V. Jones, its President, by his pastoral concern and wit. Indeed, the President's Inaugural Address, with its warning against the ecclesiastical tendency to look to 'yesterday' as the pattern for today and tomorrow, provided us with an often-used catchword and gave us a generally heeded direction in our discussions.

As is its usual practice, the Assembly gave considerable time to considering the Annual Reports of its Union Committees. Addresses from two scientists were listened to with keen interest, as we heard Dr. Roger Pilkington speak on a Christian scientist's view of the world, and Dr. John Highet discuss the changed social and cultural environment in which the Church now proclaims the Gospel. The Rev. Clifford H. Macquire uttered a deeply-moving plea for the significance of the individual. Dr. Trevor Davies visited us and proclaimed a word of encouragement. And the Rev. G. R. C. Fuller spoke of the heartening increase in income and recruits for missionary service, and set this against the world's vast and unresolved needs.

Two Scottish missionary candidates spoke briefly at our Missionary Meeting. And it was good to know that, though we have said a most grateful farewell to Mr. John K. Templeton as Union Treasurer for his distinguished services to our Union, he is now going to 'head up' a Committee with most comprehensive powers to review the whole work and organisation of our Union.

P.N.W.

United States of America

Dr. Fred Hoskins, Minister and Secretary of the General Council of Congregational-Christian Churches, has accepted appointment as Professor in the Department of the Ministry at Chicago Theological Seminary. He brings to his new post a wealth of pastoral experience, an ecumenical perspective, and administrative skill. Chicago Theological Seminary, a Congregational school, has for many years been a part of a system of federated theological faculties affiliated with the University of Chicago. From autumn 1961 it begins its independent existence, and is in the process of amplifying its faculty. Dr.

George A. Buttrick, just retired University Preacher at Harvard, spends the autumn term at Chicago as visiting professor of homiletics.

A Commission on Worship has been established to bring into focus the traditions and practices of the Church families forming the United Church of Christ. At the first full meeting of the Commission, Dr. Horton Davies, Professor of Religion at Princeton University, presented a paper on the history and nature of Congregational public worship. He was formerly Congregational minister in South London, and teacher at Rhodes University in South Africa, and at Mansfield and Regent's Park colleges at Oxford.

A new series of paper-back books for the laity is projected by Pilgrim Press, denominational publishing house. R. Norris Wilson, formerly director of Church World Service, overseas relief and rehabilitation agency of American Protestantism, is planning the series which is designed to present 'theological issues with non-theological language, in a context relevant to life in the nineteen sixties'. The books will be small, inexpensive, and pitched directly at the level of small study groups of lay people in a local congregation.

A New York Federal Court decision has dismissed an action taken against the General Council of the Congregational Christian Churches and the Evangelical Reformed Church.

Dr. Duane N. Vore, minister in Battle Creek, Mich., will become Superintendent of the Michigan Conference on September 1; Dr. Sheldon E. Mackay, secretary of the E and R Church has been named to head the Stewardship Council of the United Church of Christ; Dr. Paul Minear, professor of Biblical Theology in Yale Divinity School, has been appointed Director of Faith and Order for the World Council of Churches; Dr. Edgar Chandler has been awarded the Gold Cross of the Royal Order of George I by decree of His Majesty King Paul of Greece; Miss Alpha Stalson has been appointed associated secretary of the United Church 'Church Vocations Office' in Cleveland in succession to Miss Dorothy P. Cushing.

H.G.L.

Wales

During Easter week, Presbyterians, Methodists and Congregationalists met in Aberystwyth to pursue further their proposed union. Church government and religious beliefs were studied, with the result that it became clear that our characteristic differences seem largely to be the products of time and place. Some of the exploratory studies of these gatherings have been published under the title: 'Preparing the Way'. It is evident that our most pressing problem is adjustment in the use of ministerial manpower.

Union meetings were held at Burry Port, an industrial township in Carmarthenshire. The chairman for 1961 being the Rev. D. Harford Evans of the same town. With the celebrations of 1662 in mind, the Union called the Rev. E. Lewis Evans of Pontarddulais to the vice-chair. Dr. Evans is a graduate of the Universities of Wales and Kiel, has written many books, and was for many years the editor of the denomination's Historical Society.

One of the most urgent problems among us is caused by the dearth of candidates for the Christian Ministry. Although the number of students at the United College at Swansea is high, the flow from typically Welsh Churches is inexplicably low. On the other side, the women within our Churches are increasingly participating in intellectual and spiritual matters. E.L.E.

Book Reviews

The Christian Ministry in Africa, by Bengt Sundkler. (S.C.M., 1960, 35/-).

This illuminating and disturbing book is the result of investigations made at the request of the I.M.C. into the training and work of African pastors. It should be read by all concerned with or for the Church in Africa today. For the author not only considers the calling, work, place and training of the African pastor, but he also comments on many other connected issues, such as the relation of the Church to education. Note can be taken here only of two important points.

Professor Sundkler observes that a low standard of theological training may create in a pastor a sense of futility in dealing with some of his congregation. It is also a deterrent to recruiting for the ministry because the best-equipped young African Christians do not consider it to be worth their while. Moreover, unless the Church provides training of the highest standard she is stunting the growth of African theologians who, from the African context, may be able to give deeper understanding to the whole Christian Church on such subjects as Christ as the Second Adam. In the last chapter—'Towards Christian Theology in Africa'—some of these possibilities arising from affinities of Hebrew and African concepts, are envisaged.

Shortage of numbers has often made the minister an itinerant but the great need in Africa is for the man who is the pastor of his people, living among them. This raises the question of differences in training and of the meaning of ordination. The reader will find much to ponder over in the question whether we have forgotten that the deepest calling of the ministry is 'not to administer an organisation, but to minister to sin-sick souls'.

Ronald Bocking

Acts of Worship by W. B. J. Martin (Abingdon Press, 1960, $2.50).

This little book by a minister presently in America, but who formerly held distinguished pastorates in London and Edinburgh, contains very much more than merely the materials for Public Worship. Anyone who uses it should not omit the excellent introduction in which Dr. Martin emphasises the *corporate* nature of Christian piety, and in which he indicates—perhaps more than he is aware—the extent to which English Congregationalism has been affected by the biblical and theological revival of Europe, and the way in which this affects our concern with liturgics and the ordering of our public worship.

Illustrations of this are to be found throughout the book, not only in the biblical orientation of the prayers and litanies, but more particularly by the inclusion of Affirmations of Faith. Dr. Martin treats these in a distinctively Congregational way, as Responsive acts of worship. He deserves thanks from us for thus re-emphasising that all worship centres in the truths of the Gospel, and that we hold our freedom only within the truth that has grasped us in Jesus Christ.

At the same time, it is this section of the book that we are bound to find most unsatisfactory—because any affirmation of faith written by someone else some-

how misses the immensity of the Gospel which we profess. For me—and I can speak only for myself—no 'modern' statements can match the historic creeds of the Church. Therefore I do not think that the Affirmations of Faith that are included will satisfy everyone, but I know they will be useful to many. What is far more important is that by including them Dr. Martin has recalled us to the fact that there can be little true worship where the people are unwilling to affirm their faith.

Robert S. Paul

The Westminster Confession for Today by George S. Hendry (S.C.M., 1960, 21/-).

The different Christian communions differ widely in the way they treat their historic documents. Congregationalists, who look back, sometimes, to the Savoy Declaration or the Cambridge Platform, are apt to honour their great documents by writing fresh ones, to make plain to themselves and to others that they have renewed themselves in the faith and churchmanship of their earlier confession. Anglicans, write, or used to write, books about the Thirty Nine Articles, and more recently received a report of an ecclesiastical commission on Doctrine in the Church of England. Presbyterians, who have as much reverence for tradition as any, show a characteristic reluctance to rewrite or modify the Westminster Confession; and yet it is obviously in need of some restatement. Professor Hendry of Princeton Theological Seminary has put a keen Scottish theological mind at the service of his Church and written a most valuable commentary on the Confession. Since the text of the Westminster Confession and of the Savoy Declaration are very similar this book should prove of great interest to Congregationalists, particularly to those currently attempting to draft a new 'Confession of Faith' for Congregationalists.

It is not an easy book; it cannot be, considering the subject matter. But it is a very honest and a very rewarding book. For honesty I would refer to Professor Hendry's severe criticism of what the Confession has to say about the attributes of God. The Confession fails to bring out adequately he says, that God, who is almighty, sovereign, self-sufficient, condescends to have dealings with us, his wayward creatures, showing thereby his love, grace and mercy. The Confession 'fails to concentrate attention on the authentic image of himself which God has given us in Jesus Christ'.

And yet, there are places where the modern reader will wish Professor Hendry had been as consistently honest. Thus when he discusses the Confession's statement that 'with the same body in which he (Jesus Christ) suffered . . . he also ascended into heaven', he does not help the modern person who is naturally puzzled by the apparent crude realism of the phrase.

But this is a most valuable book, and I hope it will be used much by discussion groups that want to come to grips with the intellectual challenge that Christian faith makes to the world, and that the world makes to the Christian faith.

John Marsh

The Atonement and the Sacraments by Robert S. Paul (Hodder and Stoughton 1961, 30/-).

Dr. Paul has first written about the Atonement, and then gone on to discuss the Sacraments. His book shows how great a gain it is to have these two matters

dealt with inside the limits of one book. How much more he could have given us had he dealt with them in a common exposition!

The book begins with an introduction discussing the word 'atonement'. The first part of the book proper, Dr. Paul has called 'The Legacy of the Ancient World', and in it he surveys the contributions of the Early Fathers, the Medieval Schoolmen, the Reformers and their immediate successors the Puritans, to the doctrine of the Atonement. Dr. Paul then passes to an important discussion of 'Disputes about the Inheritance', where he examines how modern Christians have tried to rethink the doctrine of the atonement in their quite new and difficult modern world. The third and last section of the book is about 'Treasure in Earthern Vessels', and treats of the Sacraments.

I want to confine my comments to the chapter on Baptism, where Dr. Paul handles a theme which is agitating the minds of many Christians in many Communions. Dr. Paul wants a double sacramental order to be established, in which in every communion there would be the practice of both infant baptism and adult baptism. These, he thinks, should everywhere be regarded as one, not two rites, though he tries to avoid any possibility of a baptized infant, in this view, being simply 'half-done'. The merit of Dr. Paul's suggestion is that it takes seriously the two valuable theological points he recognises as seen by different sides: on the one hand, the point that baptism proclaims what God does for us 'while we are yet sinners' and entirely without our meriting; and on the other, the point that a response in faith is an indispensable part of the celebration of a Christian sacrament.

Interesting as Dr. Paul's suggestions are, I think that in the end they can afford no substitute for a much more radical searching as to what the Scriptures have to say about baptism, and an even more searching enquiry as to the precise sort of 'control' that the scriptures ought to have over the sacramental practices of the Church. Dr. Paul has given vent to one radical view when he says that 'it is a question of the means that are adequate to proclaim the gospel, what action best conveys this sacramental grace'. If I mistake not, this sentence, though by no means the whole of Dr. Paul's exposition, rests upon a separation of the sacraments from their historical roots. If *the* baptism of Jesus was really at the cross and emptied tomb, and if *that* baptism is the reality in which we share at our own baptisms, then the question of what is to represent the 'sacramental action' to us is in some part already answered. Sacraments, like the grace they convey, are surely part of the 'given-ness' of our life in the Church.

This is said to be a book by a Church historian. Dr. Paul has in it laid a sound claim to the title. I would only say that if this is Church history, let us have more of it; for this is the sort of book that can in its own way sacramentally feed the Church.

John Marsh

A History of the Evangelical and Reformed Church by various authors (Christian Education Press, 1961, $5.95).

This important book for Congregationalists to read, informs us about the cultural and religious roots of the Evangelical and Reformed Church with which the Congregational Christian Churches are uniting to form the United Church of Christ in America. As a history it suffers from the disability of almost every symposium, unevenness of treatment and the lack of consistently-held purpose. Furthermore, there is far too much detail for the general reader about

the history of institutions, publications and denominational agencies. On the other hand, it cries aloud for chapters dealing with theological and liturgical trends—indeed, I feel the writers are guilty of almost criminal humility in this respect when they could have included such names as Philip Schaff, Karl Emil Otto, Walter Rauschenbusch (his roots were there, although his membership was elsewhere), and in the modern period Reinhold and Richard Niebuhr and Paul Tillich!

One is naturally struck by the almost overwhelming cultural differences between the Anglo-Saxon Congregationalists and these German-speaking Reformed and Lutheran Churches which came directly out of the *Volkskirche* situation of Europe. Something of the immensity of their task is indicated by the fact that although they began to arrive in America in the early eighteenth-century, by 1880-3 (the peak years) Germans were arriving in America at the rate of nearly 200,000 annually. They stayed very close to their cultural roots and it was not until 1925 (or was it 1929? cf. pp. 275, 280) that the Evangelical Synod received its Presidential report in English.

But a closer look will reveal some interesting similarities that go a long way to explain the spiritual affinity that drew the E & R and Congregational Christian Churches together. First there is the ecumenical spirit which arose out of Pietism. Many of the early German preachers in America came from the Basel Mission, and we should remind ourselves that the same movement of the Spirit which produced the *Deutsche Christentumsgemellschaft* and made the Basel Mission the first inter-denominational missionary society in Europe, also produced the London Missionary Society in 1795, and made it the first such society in the Anglo-Saxon world.

Deeper than this, however, is the very striking way in which the E & R Church has held the widest spiritual and intellectual freedom within the historic faith of the Church. Historically this is a confessional Church, taking the Augsburg Confession (Lutheran) and the Heidelberg Catechism (Reformed) as doctrinal standards, but the attempt to hold these two together is quite an achievement in itself! Liturgically the Lutheran influence in ritual and vestments still continues in considerable parts of the Church, and yet in reading the history one has the remarkable impression that the dominate *spirit* has been to hold these doctrinal and liturgical emphases in freedom and not as imposed. As one of their preachers declared at the time of the union in 1934, 'Christianity has ever been in danger of hardening about organisation, polity, buildings, rituals, dogmas . . . To free ourselves from such bondage or to maintain the freedom we have achieved requires more than ordinary courage . . . and a more sacrificial spirit than a comfortable age produces'. (p. 287).

I believe that it is true to the best insights of Congregationalism. Historically we have stood for following the Spirit wherever it might seem to lead us, and yet always under the judgement of that same Spirit as it is revealed in the Bible and in the apostolic faith of the Church. As the United Church of Christ in America becomes a constituent member of the International Congregational Council we look forward to the enrichment that those of the former E & R Church will bring to us, which cannot fail to take us further out of our Anglo-Saxon insularity and closer to our brethren in Europe. But one very minor criticism—they must learn to spell Forsyth correctly! (cf. p. 287).

Robert S. Paul

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